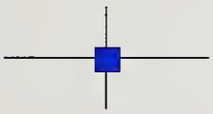
CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE



THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS ON LEARNING

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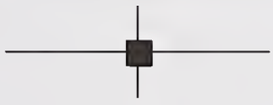
CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS ON LEARNING

EDITED BY EDWARD B. FISKE



THE ARTS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE
ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

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Edward B. "Ted" Fiske, the former Education Editor of the *New York Times*, is an internationally known education correspondent, editor, and lecturer who is widely regarded as one of the nation's leading education writers and observers of school reform. He is perhaps best known as the author of the best-selling *Fiske Guide to Colleges* (Times Books), an annual publication that is a standard part of the college admissions literature. In 1991, he published *Smart Schools, Smart Kids* (Simon & Schuster), which former U.S. Secretary of Education T. H. Bell called "the most important work on education to be published since *A Nation at Risk*."

PREFACE

When young people are involved with the arts, something changes in their lives. We've often witnessed the rapt expressions on the faces of such young people. Advocates for the arts often use photographs of smiling faces to document the experience.

But in a society that values measurements and uses data-driven analysis to inform decisions about allocation of scarce resources, photographs of smiling faces are not enough to gain or even retain support. Such images alone will not convince skeptics or even neutral decision-makers that something exceptional is happening when and where the arts become part of the lives of young people.

Until now, we've known little about the nature of this change, or how to enable the change to occur. To understand these issues in more rigorous terms, we invited leading educational researchers to examine the impact of arts experiences on young people. We developed the *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* initiative in cooperation with The Arts Education Partnership and The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to explore why and how young people were changed through their arts experiences.

We believed that evidence could be collected that would help answer the questions of why positive changes occur and what might be done to replicate them. We expected the work to build on previous research concerning the arts and learning so that similar programs could become even more effective; we also hoped to increase the overall understanding of how the arts can impact learning.

We invited the initial *Champions of Change* researchers to examine well-established models of arts education. We then added research efforts that looked beyond specific programs to larger issues of the arts in American education. Finally, we expanded our concept beyond classrooms and schools to include out-of-school settings. We wanted to better understand the impact of the arts on learning, not just on formal education.

The Champions of Change Researchers

Over the last few years, seven teams of researchers examined a variety of arts education programs using diverse methodologies:

- James S. Catterall of the Imagination Project at the University of California at Los Angeles analyzed data on more than 25,000 students from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey to determine the relationship of engagement in the arts to student performance and attitudes. He also investigated the impact of intensive involvement in instrumental music and drama/theatre on student achievement.
- Shirley Brice Heath of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Stanford University, with Adelma Roach, examined after-school programs for youth in poor communities. The researchers were interested in the qualities that made programs in the arts, sports, and community service effective sites for learning and development, and they identified features that made involvement with the arts the most powerful factor to success in and out of school.
- The Center for Arts Education Research at Teachers College, Columbia University, studied arts education programs within elementary and junior high schools. Researchers Judy Burton, Rob Horowitz, and Hal Abeles created a taxonomy of learning in the arts, and investigated the ways that learning in the arts affected learning across the curriculum and the conditions that made this possible.
- James Catterall and The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) evaluated the impact of the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE). The CAPE network of nine neighborhood-based partnerships of 23 local schools, 33 arts organizations, and 11 community-based organizations has pioneered new ways to integrate the arts with learning across the curriculum.

- Researchers at the National Center for Gifted and Talented at the University of Connecticut examined the Young Talent Program and other offerings of ArtsConnection, the largest outside provider of arts education programming to the New York City public school system. They also created a model of obstacles, success factors, and outcomes for talent development in the arts.
- Steve Seidel and researchers from Harvard University's Project Zero examined two education programs of Shakespeare & Company, a professional theatre company based in Lenox, Massachusetts. Researchers investigated the National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare, a high school teacher training program, as well as the Fall Festival of Shakespeare, an annual regional experience that involves teenagers in the study and performance of Shakespeare's works.
- Dennie Palmer Wolf and researchers from the Performance Assessment Collaboratives for Education (PACE) of Harvard's Graduate School of Education examined the Creating Original Opera program of The Metropolitan Opera Guild. This professional development program trains elementary and secondary school teachers in a process that enables young people to create, perform, and produce an original opera.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research initiative had many champions. We are grateful to them all, and would like to recognize the contributions of several who made this entire collaboration possible.

First and foremost, we thank the late Ernie Boyer, former president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and former U.S. Commissioner of Education, for encouraging us to work together. This partnership has been a highlight of our professional lives, and we will always remember Ernie as an articulate advocate for the role of the arts in young lives.

Throughout the development and implementation of *Champions of Change*, several individuals provided critical support and counsel. They included Peter Gerber, Vartan Gregorian, Rich Gurin, Ellen Lovell, Margaret Mahoney, Harold Williams, and Jim Wolfensohn.

During the research process, we held several sessions to review work in progress and identify questions for the research to be funded. In addition to the artists, educators, and researchers named in this report, we benefited from the involvement of arts and education leaders from across the country. They included Terry Baker, Jim Berk, Bob Bucker, Jessica Davis, Elliott Eisner, Carol Fineberg, Rita Foy, Milton Goldberg, Derek Gordon, Doug Herbert, Sarah Howes, Peter Martinez, Ruth Mitchell, David O'Fallon, David Perkins, Terry Peterson, Jane Remer, Dan Scheinfeld, Josiah Spaulding, Robert Stake, and Louise Stevens.

Under the leadership of executive director Dick Deasy, The Arts Education Partnership has been a critical partner for the *Champions of Change* research initiative. We are also grateful to The President's Committee for the Arts and the Humanities, honorary chair First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and executive director Harriet Mayor Fulbright for their involvement and support since the inception of this ambitious undertaking.

Finally, we thank the advisory committees and the boards of our respective institutions whose support made this extraordinary endeavor possible. We believe their significant commitment of resources for *Champions of Change* will help transform countless young lives for the better through the arts.

Jane L. Polin
The GE Fund

Nick Rabkin
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Washington, D.C. 20202

The ultimate challenge for American education is to place all children on pathways toward success in school and in life. Through engagement with the arts, young people can better begin lifelong journeys of developing their capabilities and contributing to the world around them. The arts teach young people how to learn by giving them the first step: the desire to learn. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* also shows that the arts can play a vital role in learning how to learn, an essential ability for fostering achievement and growth throughout their lives.

American education is changing, and changing for the better. Who teaches, what is taught, where teaching takes place, and how teaching occurs are evolving dramatically in communities across America. And a key factor in changing American education for the better is to increase high quality arts learning in the lives of young Americans.

Why is American education in such flux? In simplest terms, the reason is because America is in transition. We are a more diverse society facing daunting demands from global social and technological innovation. The American economy is shifting from a manufacturing-driven engine to a services-driven enterprise. If young Americans are to succeed and to contribute to what Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan describes as our "economy of ideas," they will need an education that develops imaginative, flexible and tough-minded thinking. The arts powerfully nurture the ability to think in this manner.

Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning provides new and important findings on actual learning experiences involving the arts. The report which follows presents these research findings, complete with ground-breaking quantitative and qualitative data and analysis, as articulated by leading American educational researchers. These researchers investigated the content, process, and results of learning in and through the arts. Perhaps what makes their findings so significant is that they all address ways that our nation's educational goals may be realized though enhanced arts learning. As the researchers discovered, learning in the arts can not only impact how young people learn to think, but also how they feel and behave.

The American public is demanding more than ever from our schools, and rightly so. Parents and other caregivers want to equip young people for professionally and personally rewarding careers, and they recognize that to do so we must give them greatly enriched experiences. As these researchers have confirmed, young people can be better prepared for the 21st century through quality learning experiences in and through the arts.

Dick Riley

Richard Riley
Secretary, Department of Education

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

Executive Summary

WHAT THE ARTS CHANGE ABOUT THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

As a result of their varied inquiries, the *Champions of Change* researchers found that learners can attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts. Moreover, one of the critical research findings is that the learning in and through the arts can help "level the playing field" for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances.

James Catterall's analysis of the Department of Education's NELS:88 database of 25,000 students demonstrates that students with high levels of arts participation outperform "arts-poor" students by virtually every measure. Since arts participation is highly correlated with socioeconomic status, which is the most significant predictor of academic performance, this comes as little surprise. The size and diversity of the NELS database, however, permitted Catterall to find statistical significance in comparisons of high and low arts participants in the lowest socioeconomic segments. This closer look showed that high arts participation makes a more significant difference to students from low-income backgrounds than for high-income students. Catterall also found clear evidence that sustained involvement in particular art forms—music and theater—are highly correlated with success in mathematics and reading.

These findings are enriched by comparisons of student achievement in 14 high-poverty schools in which the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) has developed innovative arts-integrated curricula. The inspiring turnaround of this large and deeply troubled school district is one of the important education stories of this decade. Schools across Chicago, including all those in this study, have been improving student performance. But, when compared to arts-poor schools in the same neighborhoods, the CAPE schools advanced even more quickly and now boast a significant gap in achievement along many dimensions.

Schools are not the only venue in which young people grow, learn, and achieve. Shirley Brice Heath spent a decade studying dozens of after-school programs for disadvantaged youth. These programs were broadly clustered into three categories—sports/academic, community involvement, and the arts. This research shows that the youth in all these programs were doing better in school and in their personal lives than were young people from the same socioeconomic categories, as tracked by NELS:88.

To the researchers' surprise, however, the youth in the arts programs were doing the best. Skeptical about this finding, Heath and her colleagues looked more closely at the arts programs and the youth participating in them. Although the youth in the arts programs were actually at greater "risk" than those in the other programs, the researchers found that characteristics particular to the arts made those programs more effective. They now believe that a combination of "roles, risks, and rules" offered in the arts programs had a greater impact on these young lives.

Another broad theme emerges from the individual *Champions of Change* research findings: the arts no longer need to be characterized solely by either their ability to promote learning in specific arts disciplines or by their ability to promote learning in other disciplines. These studies suggest a more dynamic, less either-or model for the arts and overall learning that has more of the appearance of a rotary with entrances and exits than of a linear one-way street.

This rotary of learning provides the greater access to higher levels of achievement. "Learning in and Through the Arts" (LITA) and other *Champions of Change* studies found much evidence that learning in the arts has significant effects on learning in other domains. LITA suggests a dynamic model in which learning in one domain supports and stimulates learning in others, which in turn supports and stimulates learning in a complex web of influence described as a "constellation." LITA and the other researchers provide compelling evidence that student achievement is heightened in an environment with high quality arts education offerings and a school climate supportive of active and productive learning.

Why the Arts Change the Learning Experience

When well taught, the arts provide young people with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts, and bodies. The learning experiences are real and meaningful for them.

While learning in other disciplines may often focus on development of a single skill or talent, the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities. Engagement in the arts—whether the visual arts, dance, music, theatre or other disciplines—nurtures the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies. Although the *Champions of Change* researchers conducted their investigations and presented their findings independently, a remarkable consensus exists among their findings:

- **The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached.**

Young people who are disengaged from schools and other community institutions are at the greatest risk of failure or harm. The researchers found that the arts provided a reason, and sometimes the only reason, for being engaged with school or other organizations. These young people would otherwise be left without access to any community of learners. The studies concerning ArtsConnection, CAPE, and learning during non-school hours are of particular significance here.

- **The arts reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached.**

Other recent educational research has produced insights into different styles of learning. This research also addresses examples of young people who were considered classroom failures, perhaps "acting out" because conventional classroom practices were not engaging them. These "problem" students often became the high-achievers in arts learning settings. Success in the arts became a bridge to learning and eventual success in other areas of learning. The ArtsConnection study provides case studies of such students; the "Learning In and Through the Arts" research examines the issue of learner self-perception in great depth.

- **The arts connect students to themselves and each other.**

Creating an artwork is a personal experience. The student draws upon his or her personal resources to generate the result. By engaging his or her whole person, the student feels invested in ways that are deeper than "knowing the answer." Beyond the individual, Steve Seidel and Dennie Palmer Wolf show how effective arts learning communities are formed and operated. James Catterall also describes how the attitudes of young people toward one another are altered through their arts learning experiences.

- **The arts transform the environment for learning.**

When the arts become central to the learning environment, schools and other settings become places of discovery. According to the Teachers College research team and those examining the CAPE schools, the very school culture is changed, and the conditions for learning are improved. Figurative walls between classrooms and disciplines are broken down. Teachers are renewed. Even the physical appearance of a school building is transformed through the representations of learning. The Heath research team also found "visible" changes in nonschool settings.

- **The arts provide learning opportunities for the adults in the lives of young people.**

Those held responsible for the development of children and youth—teachers, parents, and other adults—are rarely given sufficient or significant opportunities for their own continuing education. With adults participating in lifelong learning, young people gain an understanding that learning in any field is a never-ending process. The roles of the adults are also changed—in effective programs, the adults become coaches—active facilitators of learning. Heath and other researchers here describe the altered dynamics between young and less young learners.

- The arts provide new challenges for those students already considered successful.

Boredom and complacency are barriers to success. For those young people who outgrow their established learning environments, the arts can offer a chance for unlimited challenge. In some situations described in the research, older students may also teach and mentor younger students. In others, young people gain from the experience of working with professional artists. The ArtsConnection researchers in general, and James Catterall in particular, explored the impact of intensive involvement in specific art disciplines.

- The arts connect learning experiences to the world of real work.

The world of adult work has changed, and the arts learning experiences described in the research show remarkable consistency with the evolving workplace. Ideas are what matter, and the ability to generate ideas, to bring ideas to life and to communicate them is what matters to workplace success. Working in a classroom or a studio as an artist, the young person is learning and practicing future workplace behaviors. A company is a company, whether producing an opera or a breakthrough technological service.

How the Arts Change the Learning Experience

The programs and schools examined by the *Champions of Change* researchers were selected because they appeared to be models of excellence that were making a real difference to young people. Their research helps us identify the principles and requirements that make these arts learning models work. By helping to better define the characteristics of effective arts learning programs, the *Champions of Change* researchers have also done a great service.

Education reformers and researchers have learned a great deal about "what works" in recent years. In examining the work of Shakespeare & Company, Steve Seidel cites the general characteristics of "project-based learning" as factors that also support effective arts learning. In *Real Learning, Real Work*, author Adria Steinberg identifies six elements that are critical to the design of project-based learning: authenticity, academic rigor, applied learning, active exploration, adult relationships, and assessment practices. Seidel also emphasizes that the best assessment of a person's understanding is a product that "puts that understanding to work." Learning is deepest when learners have the capacity to represent what they have learned, and the multiple disciplines of the arts all provide modes of representation.

The quality arts learning experiences described by the *Champions of Change* researchers regularly contain these project-based learning elements. The best programs display them in great breadth and depth. To be effective, the arts learning experience will also

- Enable young people to have direct involvement with the arts and artists.

Young people become and see themselves as artists. Whether creating art works, as in the Creating Original Opera program, or performing, as in the Fall Festival of Shakespeare program, or perhaps even teaching younger student artists, as in the ArtsConnection program, the students learn various disciplines through hands-on arts experiences. They actively engage with artistic content, materials, and methods.

- Require significant staff development.

The best teachers are life-long students. The teachers involved in the staff development programs examined by the *Champions of Change* researchers describe life-changing experiences that transform their professional lives. High-impact programs demand both adequate staff preparation and strong administrative support. Well-trained staff and teachers also become leaders for institutional and systemic change.

- Support extended engagement in the artistic process.

Opportunities to achieve artistic and learning excellence cannot be confined to forty-five minute

time periods. Sustained engagement during individual sessions as well as expanded program length support enhanced learning opportunities. These learning experiences are also not limited to place; school is just one of many settings where this learning occurs. Superior results are also associated with the concept of "practice" and the development of a sense of "craft."

- Encourage self-directed learning.

Students learning in and through the arts become their own toughest critics. The students are motivated to learn not just for test results or other performance outcomes, but for the learning experience itself. According the to the ArtsConnection study, these learners develop the capacity to experience "flow," self-regulation, identity, and resilience—qualities regularly associated with personal success.

- Promote complexity in the learning experience.

Students who might otherwise complain of boredom become fully challenged. Unlike other learning experiences that seek right or wrong answers, engagement in the arts allows for multiple outcomes. Seidel found that when "refusing to simplify" Shakespeare's challenging texts, students became passionately engaged in learning classic works which high schoolers so often consider boring. Effective learning in the arts is both complex and multi-dimensional.

- Allow management of risk by the learners.

Rather than see themselves as "at-risk," students become managers of risk who can make decisions concerning artistic outcomes and even their lives. The students learn to manage risk through "permission to fail," according to the Shakespeare & Company study, and then take risks "to intensify the quality of their interactions, products, and performances," according to Heath and her colleagues.

- Engage community leaders and resources.

Another recent study, Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts That Value Arts Education, found that "the single most critical factor in sustaining arts education in (their) schools is the active involvement of influential segments of the community in shaping and implementing the policies and programs of the district." Similarly, effective arts learning out of school also requires the active engagement of the community. The CAPE and Heath studies show a process that attracts and builds on this engagement from parents and other community members.

Policy Implications of the Champions of Change Research

The *Champions of Change* studies examined the messy, often hard-to-define real world of learning, both in and out of schools. As a result, these research findings have immediate relevance for both policy and practice in American education today.

For example, if we now know that arts experiences help level the educational playing field for disadvantaged students, as revealed by James Catterall, then we need to bring more proven arts learning resources to these students. If arts learning can help energize or re-energize the teaching workforce, as described by Steve Seidel, then we must look to the arts both as a vehicle for preparing entrants to the teaching profession and as a means of supporting its more-experienced members. Looking beyond classrooms, Shirley Brice Heath found the profound impact the arts can have on learning for youth outside school settings. If this is so, we must expand quality arts learning programs outside of schools as well.

In the CAPE model, the researchers find that arts learning can have a defined impact on the academic performance of students in an urban setting. If well-constructed partnerships between school and arts organizations can increase student achievement, then such partnerships must be nurtured and replicated. In another urban program, ArtsConnection researchers define the role of the arts in enabling students to overcome obstacles to success; again, such experiences should be made more widely available. Researcher Dennie Palmer Wolf describes the impact of group

versus individual learning generated through a collaborative arts experience. For this approach to grow, a more serious commitment to developing communities of arts learners, rather than just opportunities for "stars," is required. If sustained, integrated, and complex projects, like producing an opera, a Shakespeare production, or a visual arts exhibition, significantly deepen the learning process, as these studies suggest, then school schedules must also be modified to make such experiences possible.

The findings of the individual research studies are worthy of the reader's careful review.

We owe a great debt to these researchers for their diligence and insights; we can only repay this debt by heeding their words and seeking systemic ways to make the arts a meaningful part of every American child's life. Together, we can make the everyday learning experiences of young Americans less ordinary and more extraordinary.

CONCLUSION

These *Champions of Change* studies demonstrate how involvement with the arts provides unparalleled opportunities for learning, enabling young people to reach for and attain higher levels of achievement. The research provides both examples and evidence of why the arts should be more widely recognized for its current and potential contributions to the improvement of American education.

Similarly, the experiences we offer too many young people outside of school are often limited in their purpose and resulting impact. They provide recreation, but no sense of creation. They provide recess, but no sense of success. Arts learning outside of schools can also enhance the sense of accomplishment and well-being among our young people.

This research provides compelling evidence that the arts can and do serve as champions of change in learning. Yet realizing the full potential of learning in and through the arts for all American children will require heroic acts from all segments of our society. With the 21st century now upon us, we, too, must be champions of change; we must meet and exceed the challenge of giving our young people the best possible preparation we can offer them. To do so, we must make involvement with the arts a basic part of their learning experiences. In doing so, we will become champions for our children and their children.

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